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Diana T Fritz 02/05/2007 05:14:13 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 003693

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STATE FOR PM, NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/14
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [MASS](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [GE](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: A/S BLOOMFIELD MEETS UAE DEPUTY PM SHEIKH HAMDAN

Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: During an October 17 meeting, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed and A/S Bloomfield reviewed US-UAE bilateral cooperation and discussed the current situation in Iraq as well as specific military cooperation issues. Sheikh Hamdan offered advice on how to recruit Sunni support within Iraq, and warned of Iranian interference in Iraq's internal affairs. He said the UAE is open to discussions on the disposition of its SCUD missiles. On the UAE's request for an armed Predator, he stated that the UAE was developing its own system, and regretted that the US could not meet the UAE's homeland security needs. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Meeting participants: A/S Bloomfield, Ambassador Sison, Frank Ruggiero, (PM/RSAT), Pol Chief (note taker), MFA U/S Abdullah Rashid Al Nuaimi and MFA Asst. U/S for Political Affairs Tariq Al Haidan.

UAE's Positive Role on Behalf of Iraqis

¶3. (C) Sheikh Hamdan described the UAE's role in persuading Germany to participate more actively in the reconstruction of Iraq. Germany has helped train Iraqi police officers in the UAE and plans to train pilots and vehicle/aircraft mechanics in the UAE in the near future, he said. Sheikh Hamdan, who met with Chancellor Schroder when he led a high-level delegation to Berlin in April, said he hoped

other European countries would follow Germany's example. Bloomfield agreed that there had been a forward-looking shift in German policy and he thanked the UAE for its positive role.

Reassuring Iraq's Sunnis

¶4. (C) When asked for his views about how the U.S. could convince Iraq's Sunnis that we are not against them, Sheikh Hamdan replied that more Sunni notables should be included in the government. Under Saddam, Sunnis were accustomed to playing a role in government and in commerce, but with Saddam's ouster, they are afraid that their influence "is slipping out of their hands," he said. While not a "magical solution," Sheikh Hamdan told Bloomfield that co-opting Sunni notables into government could be a way forward. Bloomfield thanked Sheikh Hamdan for the advice and suggested that the Arabic media could help defuse the Iraqi insurgency by broadcasting the more positive message that while Saddam's day is over, Sunnis can prosper in the new Iraq, and have many neighbors who support them. Sheikh Hamdan agreed that it was important to maintain the delicate equilibrium among the Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurds of Iraq. "They are all part of the balance of power," he said. It was also important to proceed with elections and not have a fragmented Iraq, he added. He cautioned that not holding elections would be catastrophic.

Iranian Influence in Iraq

¶5. (S) Sheikh Hamdan said that Iran's interference in Iraq was a very serious matter and urged the US to be very prudent about this issue. He said he had firsthand knowledge of Iran using the cover of a commercial company to conduct intelligence operations inside Iraq. He recounted talks he had recently with Hassan Sadr, Iran's next ambassador to Saudi Arabia, in which Sadr told him of plans to establish a UAE-Iran commercial enterprise in Iraq. Bloomfield said that US experts have a range of views on the extent of Iranian influence in southern Iraq.

¶6. (S) When Bloomfield told of USG efforts to eliminate shoulder-fired missiles capable of shooting down an aircraft, and that there is recent evidence in Iraq of such missiles originating in Iran, Sheikh Hamdan opined that this was one way the Iranians are trying to send "a warning shot" to the US to stay away from Iran. Sheikh Hamdan said the Iranians want the US to know that if our policy is contemplating attacking Iran next, we will face a stronger resistance from Iranians than we have from Iraqis. The Iranians are trying to send the message to the US that if we were to intervene in Iran it would be costly for us.

¶7. (C) Sheikh Hamdan said the UAE is deeply concerned about what Iran represents as well as the threat of terrorism emanating from Iran. He urged the international community to be strong in the face of Iran's WMD threat. Bloomfield said the US wants Iran to be a good neighbor but finds the opposite in all directions. He said Iran should stop antagonizing the world community, and must cooperate with the IAEA.

Status of US Military in the UAE

¶8. (C) Bloomfield thanked the UAE for being a good host to US military operations during OEF and OIF, and said it was important for Sheikh Hamdan to raise with him and the Embassy any issues in the relationship that may be cause discomfort before they come between us. Sheikh Hamdan said he was not aware of any major problems in the relationship other than the occasional U.S. violation of UAE air space, which he called a sensitive issue for the Emiratis.

ATACMS and North Korean SCUDS

¶9. (S) Asked about UAE's intention on ATACMS, Sheikh Hamdan told Bloomfield that he would inquire about the status of the ATACMS MOU and follow up with the Ambassador. In the context of ATACMS issue, Bloomfield reminded Sheikh Hamdan of previous discussions with him about UAE's willingness to discard its North Korean SCUD missiles.

(S) Sheikh Hamdan said he would discuss the matter with his brother, Abu Dhabi Deputy Crown Prince and Chief of Staff of the UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, and then inform us, but he assured Bloomfield that the SCUDS matter would be handled cooperatively and with full transparency. Bloomfield offered to send a team to the UAE for discussions. The removal of SCUDS from the UAE would be a "good news story" for Congress, he said, and would eliminate another former customer in the Middle East for North Korean weapons, contributing to our efforts to cut off one of the North Koreans' important sources of hard currency to build up their nuclear weapons program.

Predator

¶10. (S) Sheikh Hamdan raised the issue of the UAE's request for an armed Predator UAV by stating unequivocally that the UAE is in the advanced stages of negotiations with its allies for a UAV system that meets its homeland defense requirements. He said the UAE regretted the fact that the US was not able to satisfy the UAE's needs, but thanked us for our efforts. He reiterated that the UAV, which he said would be co-produced in the UAE (note: South Africa, Jordan), would be effective for UAE's homeland security, but also in protecting the UAE's allies.

¶11. (U) A/S Bloomfield cleared this message.

SISON